

# **The Effects of Prior Treatment Utilization on Substance Abuse Treatment Outcomes**

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationship of prior drug treatment histories and outcomes of the current drug treatment. Data were obtained from 511 adult clients participating in a prospective study of processes and outcomes of drug treatment. The sample was broken into three groups, reflecting previous treatment experiences: no prior treatment, formal treatment only, and formal treatment plus self-help participation.

## **Abstract (con't)**

Results revealed that clients with no prior treatment were higher functioning and had less severe drug use and psychological distress than clients with any treatment experience, especially the formal treatment plus self-help clients.

# Introduction

- Research has found that prior substance abuse treatment can influence current treatment participation and outcome, which in turn can influence future treatment seeking, utilization, and effectiveness.
- The present study examined the relationship of prior drug treatment histories and outcomes of the current drug treatment.

## Method

- 511 adult clients were sampled from 19 treatment facilities in Los Angeles County
- 3 groups were created based upon previous treatment experiences:
  - No Prior Treatment (27.2%)
  - Formal Treatment Only (32.3%)
  - Formal Treatment Plus Self-Help Participation (40.5%)

## **Results: Pretreatment Characteristics (Tables 1 & 2)**

- Formal treatment clients were less likely to have completed high school than the no prior treatment or formal treatment plus self-help clients
- A greater proportion of the no prior treatment clients were employed at baseline than the formal treatment plus self-help clients

## **Results: Pretreatment Characteristics (Tables 1 & 2)**

- A greater proportion of no prior treatment clients were in outpatient drug-free treatment, whereas the formal treatment only clients were more likely to be in residential treatment and formal treatment plus self-help clients in inpatient detox.
- Formal treatment plus self-help clients had more prior treatment episodes than formal treatment only clients

## **Results: Drug Use History (Figures 1 & 2)**

- No prior treatment clients were older than the formal treatment and formal treatment plus self-help clients when they first used any drug, began regular use of any drug, and entered their first drug treatment
- No prior treatment clients were more likely to be in treatment for amphetamine or marijuana use, whereas the formal treatment and formal treatment plus self-help clients were more likely in treatment for cocaine/crack or heroin/opiate use



# **Results: Treatment Motivation and Readiness and Psychological Distress (Figures 3 & 4)**

- No prior treatment clients had significantly higher problem recognition than the other two groups
- Formal treatment plus self-help clients had higher level of desire for help, treatment readiness, and readiness to quit than the no prior treatment clients
- The formal treatment plus self-help clients had significantly higher levels of somatization, anxiety, and depression at both baseline and follow-up than no prior treatment clients.

## **Results: Drug Use at Follow-Up (Figure 5)**

- No prior treatment clients were more likely to be abstinent at the one-year follow-up than either the formal treatment or formal treatment plus self-help clients.
- No prior treatment clients were also less likely to have used heroin or cocaine by the follow-up. They were also less likely than the formal treatment clients to have used marijuana by the follow-up interview.
- No differences were found for amphetamine or alcohol use

## Discussion

- Clients who had either formal treatment or formal treatment plus self-help experience had significantly different pretreatment characteristics, drug use histories, treatment motivation/readiness, psychological distress, and drug use at follow-up than the no prior treatment clients.
- For example, the no prior treatment clients used different types of drugs and began their drug use at a later age than either of the other two groups.

## Discussion (con't)

- The no prior treatment clients also reported lower levels of psychological distress and drug use at follow-up than the formal treatment plus self-help clients.
- In general, clients with no prior treatment were higher functioning and had less severe drug use and psychological distress than clients with any treatment experience, especially the formal treatment plus self-help.

# Implications

- Clients with different treatment histories vary in terms of treatment engagement processes
- Different types of treatment protocols may be required depending on the client's prior treatment history and self-help utilization.

# Table 1. Pretreatment Characteristics

Variable	No prior treatment (n=139)	Formal treatment only (n=165)	Formal treatment plus self-help (n=207)	Total (N=511)
<b>Age (SD)</b>	34.7 (10.9)	36.2 (9.6)	36.8 (8.9)	36.0 (9.7)
<b>Male (%)</b>	43.9	46.1	43.0	44.2
<b>Race (%)</b>				
White	45.3	32.7	42.0	39.9
African American	28.8	37.6	32.9	33.3
Hispanic	14.4	22.4	18.4	18.6
Other	11.5	7.3	6.8	8.2
<b>Completed high school (%)*</b>	73.4	62.4	73.9	70.1
<b>Marital Status (%)</b>				
Married or living together	26.6	26.1	26.1	26.2
Single or live as though single	73.4	73.9	73.9	73.8
<b>Employed (%)*</b>	34.5	26.7	19.3	25.8

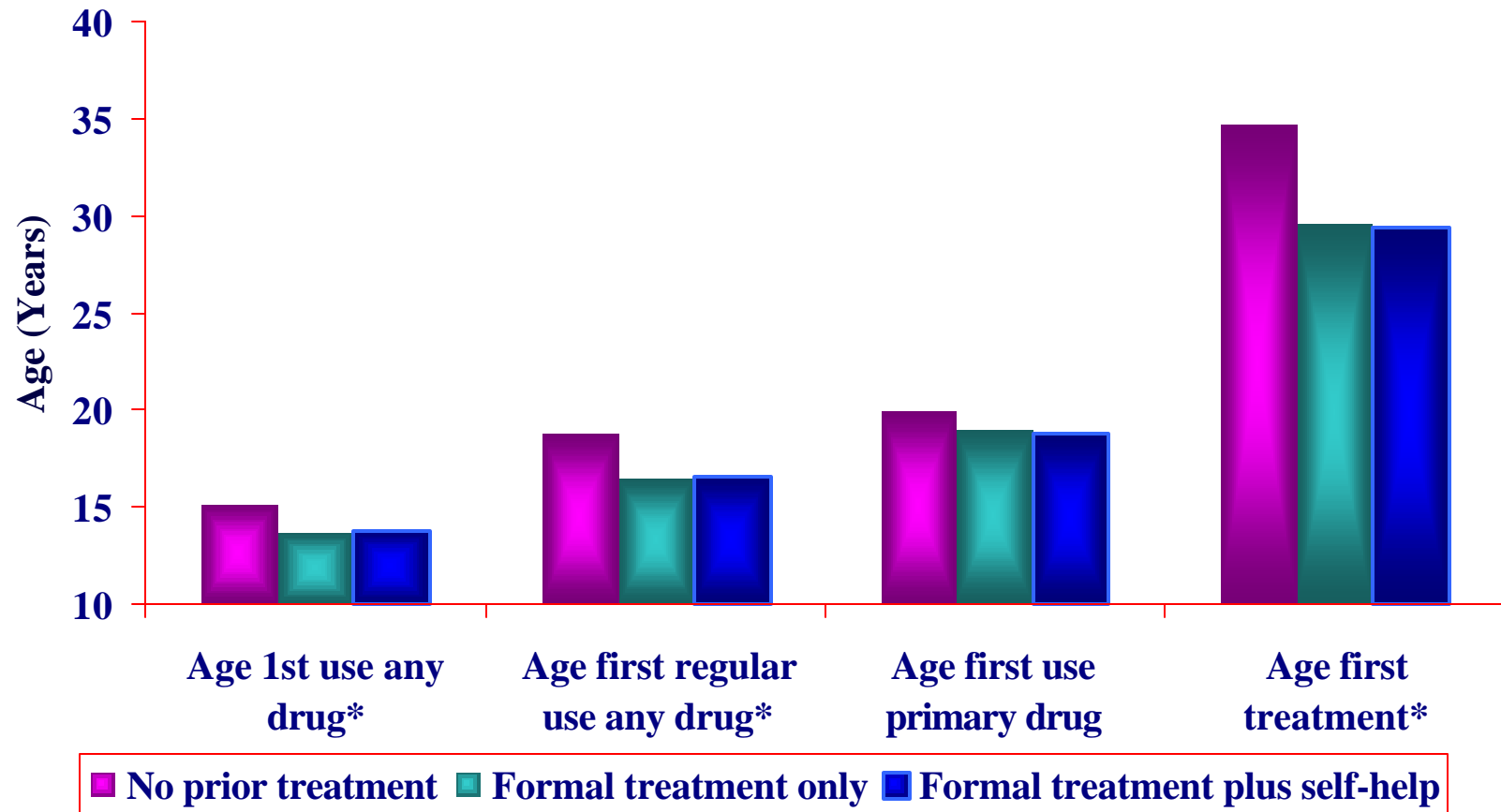
\* indicates significant group differences

## Table 2. Pretreatment Characteristics

<b>Tx Modality</b> (%)*	No prior tx	Formal tx only	Formal tx plus self-help	Total
Residential	25.9	33.9	23.7	27.6
Inpatient detox	4.3	7.3	12.6	8.6
Outpatient drug-free	66.2	44.2	51.2	53.0
Methadone Maintenance	3.6	14.6	2.6	10.8
<b># prior treatments*</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>5.9 (12.1)</b>	<b>14.2 (23.7)</b>	<b>7.6 (17.6)</b>
Hospital inpatient	N/A	6.4 (13.7)	7.3 (8.5)	7.0 (10.6)
Partial hospitalization	N/A	1.0 (0.0)	1.3 (0.5)	1.2 (0.4)
Day treatment	N/A	1.6 (0.8)	1.6 (1.0)	1.6 (0.9)
Residential*	N/A	2.0 (2.4)	3.2 (3.5)	2.7 (3.2)
Outpatient	N/A	1.7 (2.1)	1.9 (1.4)	1.8 (1.8)
Methadone treatment	N/A	12.5 (19.4)	13.2 (22.2)	12.9 (21.1)
Self-help	N/A	NA	5.4 (15.1)	5.4 (15.1)

\* indicates significant group differences

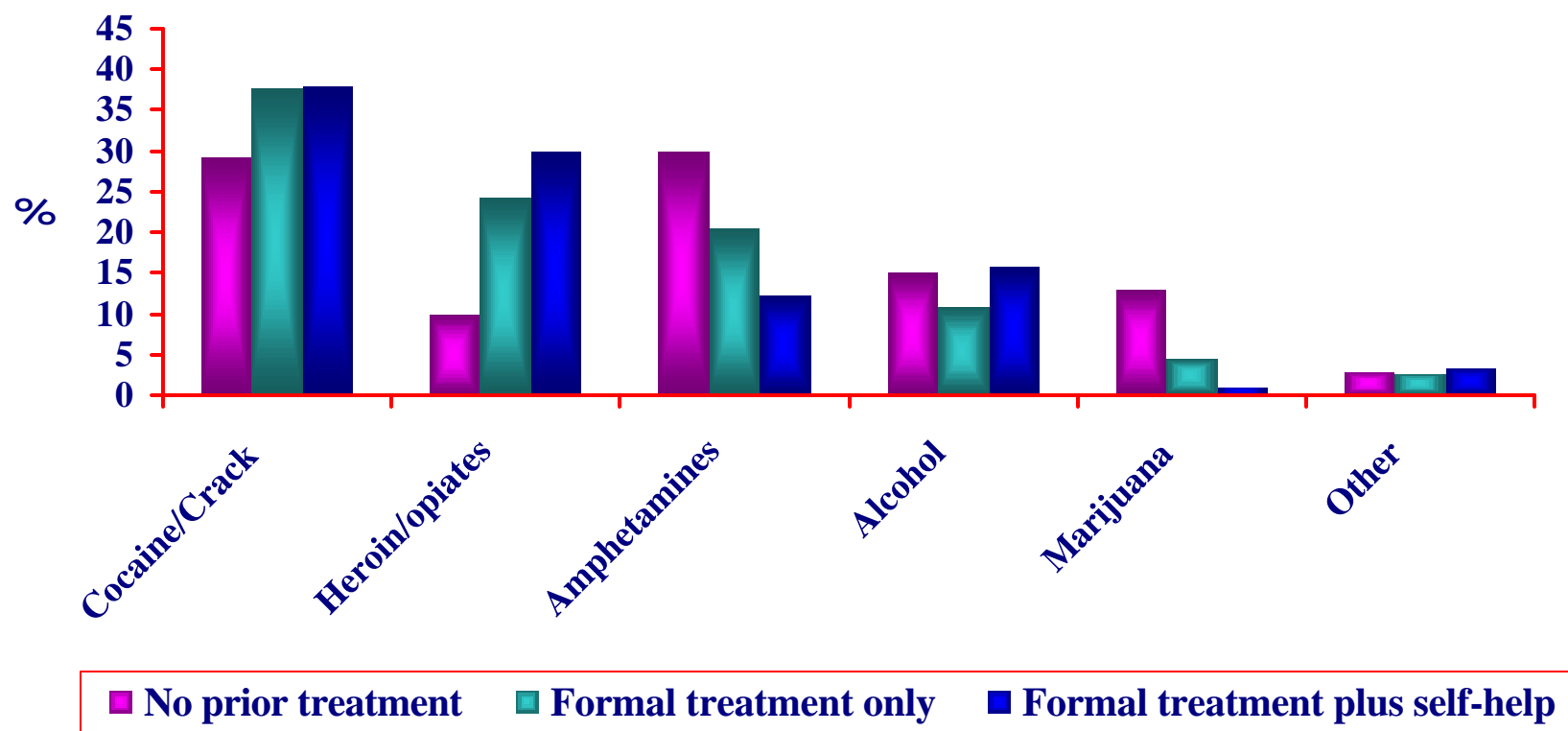
# Figure 1. Drug Use History



\* indicates significant group differences

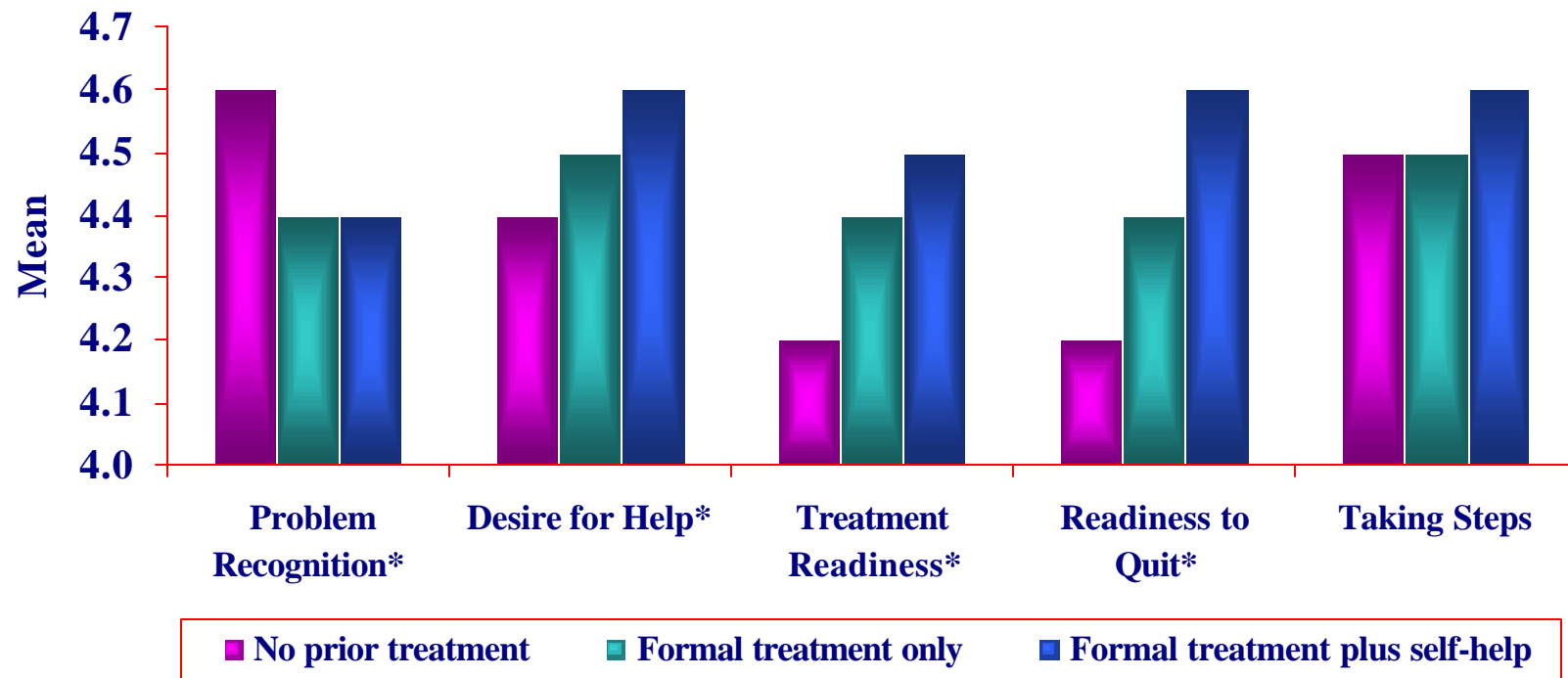


## Figure 2. Substance Use at Baseline



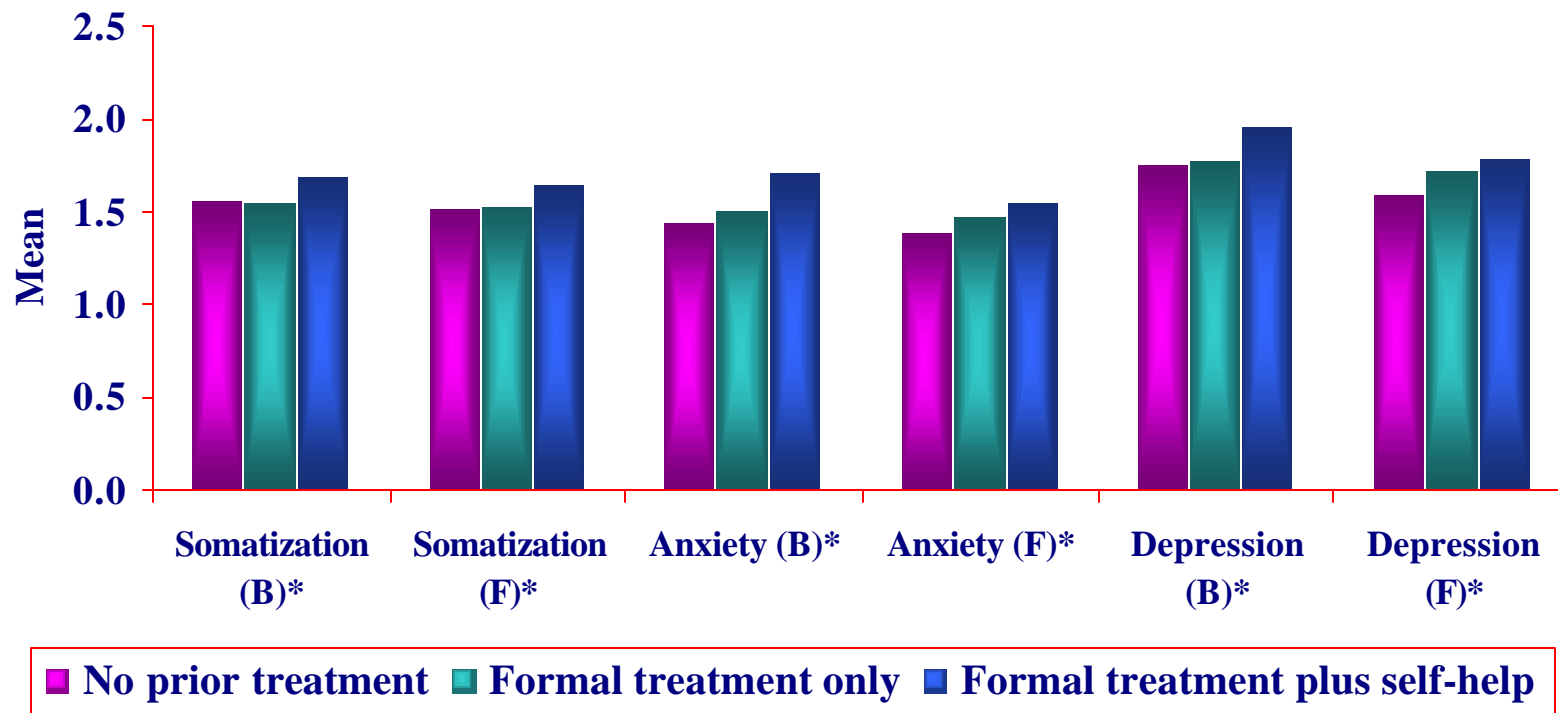
$p \leq .001$

# Figure 3. Treatment Motivation and Readiness



\* indicates significant group differences

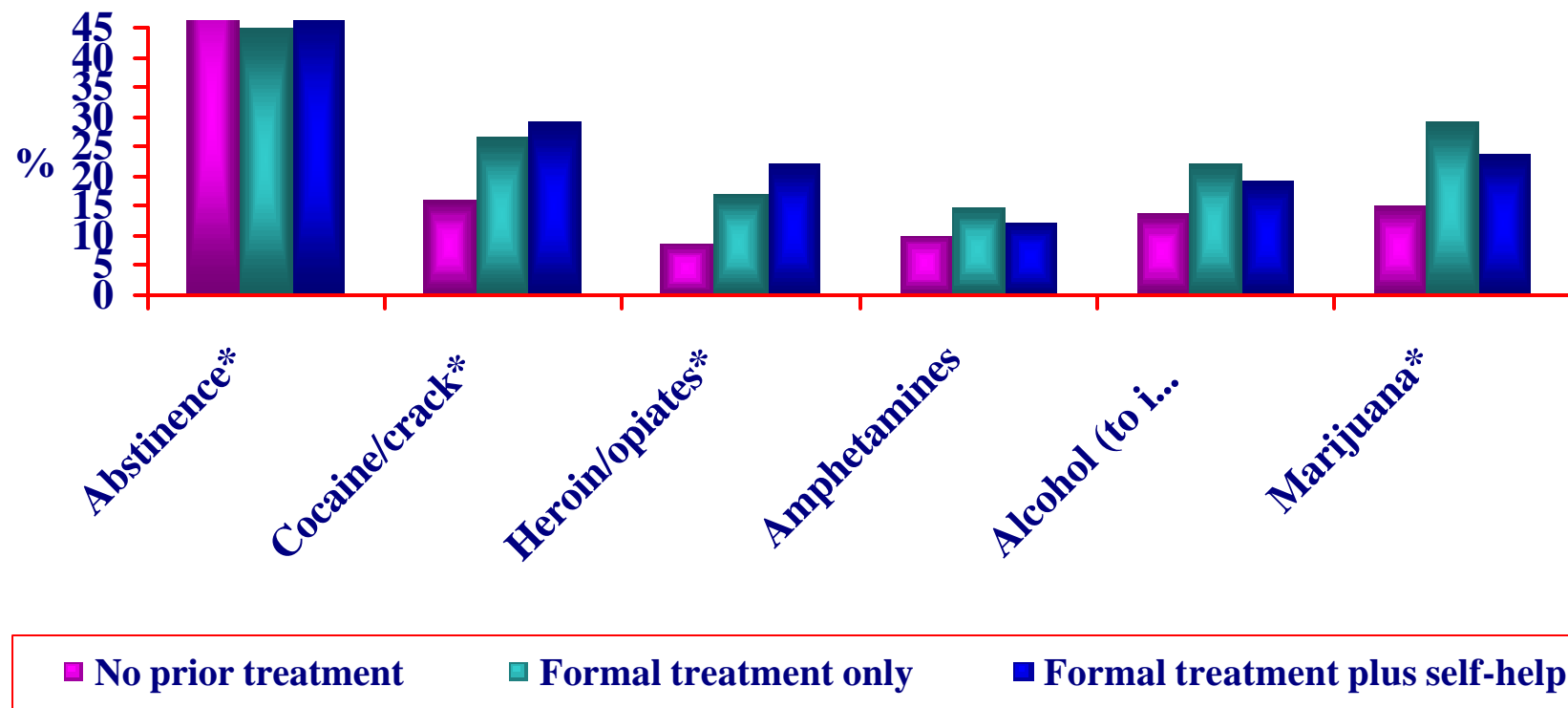
# Figure 4. Psychological Distress Baseline and Follow-up



B=Baseline  
F=Follow-up

\* indicates significant group differences

## Figure 5. Drug Use at Follow-up



\* indicates significant group differences